

**Request for Concept Papers**  
**Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities**

## **1. PURPOSE STATEMENT**

USAID/Sierra Leone is seeking applications for concept papers **to increase the participation of people with disabilities (PWDs) in USAID programs/activities and strengthen the capacities/services of disabled people's organizations (DPOs) in USAID activities and organizations run by and for people with disabilities.** All awards (grants or cooperative agreements) under this request for concept papers will not exceed \$300,000 and such award will be administered through USAID/Sierra Leone. Applications must be submitted in English and use of the attached application form is mandatory.

Funding for this activity will be sourced through the Office of Democracy and Governance in the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. Funds should be used to support projects and programs that will increase the participation of people with disabilities in line with the programs and strategies of USAID/Sierra Leone.

Program areas to be considered include agriculture and food security; democracy, human rights & governance; economic growth and trade; gender equality and women's empowerment; and science; among others. Capacity building programs for DPOs may include organizational capacity, advocacy efforts, cross-disability coalition-building and coordination, and leadership and training.

Two concept papers will be considered for small fund programs between \$20,000 and \$300,000 to be implemented for a period not exceeding three years. For the larger fund programs from \$300,000 - \$600,000, only one concept paper may be considered. Additionally, concept papers will be considered for "one time grants" only, with no expectations for follow-on funding.

Applications should be from qualified U.S. or non-U.S. entities, such as private, non-profit organizations (or for-profit companies willing to forego profits), including private voluntary organizations, universities, research organizations, professional associations, and relevant special interest associations. Awards to U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with (1) 22 C.F.R. 226, (2) OMB Circulars and (3) the USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients. Awards to non-U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Recipients. All awards are subject to the availability of funds. The U.S. Government reserves the right to accept or reject any or all concept paper proposals. Applicants are responsible for all costs associated with concept paper proposal preparation.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 15% of any population has some form of disability with a higher incidence of disability in

countries that are post conflict. Of the one billion people throughout the world who have a disability, 80% live in less resourced nations.

People with disabilities have been marginalized from traditional development activities due to discrimination or inadvertent barriers, which have limited their access to health care services, education, employment, and civil society integration.

Previously, emphasis has been put on developing separate programs for people with disabilities rather than trying to integrate them into existing development activities. Although it may be necessary at times to develop separate programs to target specific needs of some individuals, the needs of people with disabilities are much like everyone else's and must be considered from the start in mainstream programs.

In 1997, USAID adopted a disability policy that advanced a clear vision and framework for the Agency's efforts in the area of disability inclusion. The policy states that USAID will not discriminate against people with disabilities and will work to ensure the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities in USAID-funded programs and activities. The policy also calls on USAID missions to reach out to partners, host country counterparts and other donors to lead a collaborative effort to end discrimination against, and promote equal opportunity for, people with disabilities.

In July 2009, the U.S. signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ensuring its commitment to the human rights of people with disabilities around the world. To date, several of the countries in which USAID operates have also signed/ratified the convention, signaling a global movement towards the full realization of the rights of people with disabilities and their role in the international development community.

### **3. AREAS OF INTEREST**

The two main objectives of the disability funding are to increase participation of people with disabilities in USAID programs and activities and to strengthen the capacity and services of disabled people's organizations (DPOs).

Ideally, activities should complement USAID/Sierra Leone's strategic objectives.

The lists provided under each heading are only illustrative - other innovative ideas are welcome.

#### **A. Increase participation of people with disabilities in existing or new USAID programs.**

Examples:

- 1) Promote participation of people with disabilities in democratic processes and elections.

- 2) Foster inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in mainstream education programs through teacher-training programs, adaptive technology, community outreach, etc.
- 3) Increase employment and economic opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities.
- 4) Build capacity of humanitarian relief workers and first responders to better incorporate the needs of people with disabilities in all disaster relief planning.
- 5) Improve national laws and policies to better reflect the inclusion of people with disabilities within countries.
- 6) Develop, support and strengthen sports programs for people with disabilities

## **B. Strengthen the capacity and services of DPOs.**

Examples:

- 1) Improve the organizational capacity, financial management, human/material resources, strategic planning, fundraising, leadership and coordination of DPOs.
- 2) Support the development and/or strengthening of national and regional cross-disability networks and coalitions.
- 3) Support the establishment and/or strengthening of consumer-controlled disability resource centers (often referred to as “Independent Living Centers” in the U.S.) that promote the full independence and participation of people with disabilities in society.
- 4) Build advocacy skills of DPOs to increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in programs funded by USAID, host governments and other donors.
- 5) Provide training on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **4. CONCEPT PAPER SELECTION PROCESS**

- i. USAID/Sierra Leone solicits and reviews concept papers.
- ii. USAID/Sierra Leone sends short-listed concept paper(s) to Washington.
- iii. Washington selects and recommends concept papers for funding.
- iv. Final negotiations, awards and management will be the responsibility of USAID/Sierra Leone.

**IMPORTANT:** Concept papers that are considered non-responsive to the terms and conditions of this announcement will not be reviewed. The standard application form must be used and applicants must respect the eight-page limit.

## 5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The concept papers will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

### I. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANT (20 points)

*To receive a full score of 20 points the organization will have:*

- a. Extensive involvement in disability inclusion or be a Disabled People's Organization.
- b. Previous experience in project management or managing activities related to those proposed in the concept paper.
- c. A clear understanding of the disability landscape and situation of people with disabilities in the country/region of programming.
- d. A clear mission set of objectives and orientation that is in line with proposed activities.

### II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION (60 points)

*To receive a full score of 60 points the project must:*

- Show a clear link between the described need and the proposed activities.
- Describe the impact of the proposed project on existing USAID programs, activities or strategies.
- Define who will benefit from the project (children, youth, adults; people with disabilities or not; government institutions, families, local community, schools, etc; disaggregated by sex).
- Provide an activity schedule that is well-defined and realistic.
- Document what indicators (beyond the core indicators under IIP 3.3.2) will be used to show the project impact.

### III. INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (20 points)

*To receive a full score of 20 points the organization will:*

- Show evidence of linkages with existing disability programs or organizations in the country where activities are being proposed.
- Illustrate how people with disabilities have been/will be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the program.
- Ensure that women and girls with disabilities will participate in and benefit from activities.